

2012 CLIFF LEDE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, BECKSTOFFER TO KALON VINEYARD, NAPA VALLEY

Established in 2002, Cliff Lede Vineyards encompasses sixty acres in the famed Stags Leap District. Owner Cliff Lede, Vineyard Architect David Abreu, and Winemaker Chris Tynan have come together to form an unrivaled team, making the most of this remarkable property.

Vintage

The 2012 vintage was a glorious year for Napa Valley. A frost-free and uniform bud break was followed by steady spring weather during flowering, allowing for even fruit set. Summer conditions were moderate, with warm days, cool nights, and minimal heat spikes, ideal for slow and steady grape maturation. The wines are showing exceptional balance with concentrated, ripe fruit complemented by bright acidity and supple, yet intense, structure. Optimal ripeness was achieved thanks to an early autumn of consistently warm days.

Vineyards

Our first release from this vaunted site, this Cabernet Sauvignon is sourced from Block A1 clone 4, Block D1 clone 7, and Block F1 clone 337, of the Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard in the Oakville sub-appellation of Napa Valley. Situated on the western Oakville bench, the Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard has gravelly loam soils with high mineral content derived from sedimentary deposits of the volcanic Mayacamas Mountains and the alluvial fan of the Napa River. The vineyard has low organic matter content and thorough drainage, which devigorates the vines and produces small berries that are ideal for wines with intense concentration. The site is warm and sunny throughout the day, but cooled by late afternoon breezes, producing ripe Cabernet Sauvignon with lovely acidity. The blocks that make up our blend represent a diverse array of the Beckstoffer To Kalon *terroir* and clonal selection, creating a unique and exceptional wine from this praised site.

Winemaking

In the cool darkness of night, grapes were hand-picked into twenty-five pound bins to minimize crushing. By early morning, the grapes were subjected to rigorous selection by our three-tiered sorting process which includes our cutting edge optical sorter, and a slow, individual berry hand sort. The fruit was gently gravity-delivered to small tanks and wooden *cuvés* by our unique crane system which kept the berries intact. Cold soaks lasted from five to eight days, and fermentations were managed through a combination of pump overs and *délestage*. Extended maceration of up to six weeks ensured exceptional extraction and fine-tuning of tannin profiles. This wine underwent eighteen months of *élevage* in French oak barrels, 85% of which were new.

Tasting Notes

Our inaugural release of Cliff Lede Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon from the historic Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard features a delightful interplay of concentrated, ripe dark fruit and aromas of violets, exotic spice, and dark chocolate. Flavors of dry aged steak and black truffles complement the unctuous texture and full body. The loam and graphite notes showcase the allure of this vineyard.

Analysis

Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Alcohol: 14.8%
Production: 456 cases
Bottling Date: July 2014
Release Date: April 2015